

The ATLATL

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD ATLATL ASSOCIATION, INC.
1191 NUCLA STREET, AURORA, COLORADO 80011, USA

RABBIT STICK

Rabbit Stick, an event featuring primitive skills and arts was begun back in 1978 by Larry Dean Olsen and the staff of "Woodsmoke" Magazine. After several years, it fell by the wayside, only to be reborn in 1988 through the hard work of WAA member, Dave Wescott, director of Boulder Outdoor Survival School, Inc.

The title, RABBIT STICK comes from the simple tool used extensively by certain native Americans and in a modified version, all over the world. The stick was a tool designed, shaped and used for the specific purpose of being thrown at and striking down rabbits and other small game. Rabbit sticks like boomerangs are among the worlds earliest and longest lasting devices. In some cultures, the rabbit stick used by the ancient hunter was passed to the next generation along with the skills, knowledge and insights needed to make it work. The RABBIT STICK RENDEZVOUS is an effort to preserve and master ancient arts and technologies, and pass them to the future just as our forbearers would have done.

The 1988 RABBIT STICK RENDEZVOUS held in mid September on the banks of historic Henry's Fork of the Snake River in southeastern Idaho, consisted of four days of intense instruction and learning. Several other WAA members attended this 1988 event including Bob Perkins and Paul Leininger of BPS Engineering, and Brian James winner of the 1988 Atlatl World Open.

So successful was the 1988 event, that plans began immediately for the 1989 RABBIT STICK. Next years event will be expanded to five days, September 19-24 1989, and will be limited to 200 participants. Dave Wescott tells us they are expecting instructors from nearly 30 primitive disciplines. Registrations have already begun with a cut off date of January 31, 1989. For more information and registration forms, contact: BOSS, BOULDER OUTDOOR SURVIVAL SCHOOL, P. O. BOX 905, REXBURG, ID 83440 (Phone 208 356-7446.

IN DISCUSSING THE REAL MEANING OF LIFE, THE FOLLOWING RULE EMERGED:

THE ONE WHO DIES WITH THE MOST TOYS WINS.

U. S. PURCHASES STRATEGIC WEAPONS

by Doug Bowman

Dolores, CO. A dramatic event unfolded at the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado in August. Doug Bowman, purchasing agent for the new Star Wars program Okayed the low bid from arms dealer, Bill Tate to purchase four sub-sonic atlatls. A major demonstration of the new weapon was given to the public and visiting dignitaries at the grand opening of the Heritage Center fort on August 27th, 1988. Several arms experts including Doug Bowman, Bob Brooks, John Sanders and Bruce Bradley gave hands on instructions to the public in the fine art of atlatl weapons control. No casualties were reported as some 150 participants vented their wrath at an innocent hay bale.

ATLATL DART IMPACT STUDY MADE

On May 12, 1988, a group of students, photographers and interested bystanders attended a test being made by Prof. Val Viers, of the Physics Department at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, CO. The purpose of the demonstration was two fold. First, students were to make detailed measurements of the impact made by hand thrown darts as opposed to atlatl thrown darts. The second purpose of the gathering was to film Dr. Dennis Stanford, curator of North American Archaeology for the Smithsonian, as a part of the first of a PBS series called The Infinite Voyage. This segment was titled, THE SEARCH

FOR ANCIENT AMERICANS.

For this test, the target was set against an inflated device which when compressed by the force of a dart striking the target would cause a measurement to appear on an oscilloscope, a pen marking graph and a direct reading gage. The results of the test astounded everyone. Measurements varied from 50 to 500 times (averaging about 200 times) more impact using the spear thrower.

The PBS film, THE SEARCH FOR ANCIENT AMERICANS shows portions of the test and discusses the atlatl and compound dart system. Should you have the chance to view this film, do so. It is well worth the time spent.



DR. DENNIS STANFORD DISCUSSES HIS ESKIMO STYLED "THROWING BOARD" BEFORE THE PBS CAMERA.

**NOTICE!! EASTCOAST
ATLATL CONTEST!!**

ATTENTION ATLATLER'S -- They do it in the central states! They do it in the Midwest! They do it in the Northwest! WE NEED TO START DOING IN IN THE EAST.

Plans are now being made to start an annual Northeast competition. Who will come? What will we do? What can be used?

Well, we don't have all the answers yet, and that's why we would like to hear from you interested folk all up and down the East Coast on what you think.

Here's our thoughts: Anything goes as far as equipment, or we can have two separate categories, one for home-made or all natural, one for the modern. Competition to be in four categories: Distance throw; Distance grouping; 15 meter accuracy; 40 meter accuracy. Age and gender categories as necessary.

Time of 1 year -- Thinking of end of August or mid-September. 1-day competition.. Place: Williamsport, PA. Camping and many hotels nearby.

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!! Let us know if you are interested in competing, visiting, helping, or whatever. We will put your name on a separate list to be contacted with future information. Write to INDIAN-ARTIFACT MAGAZINE, ATTN: ATLATL, Rd 1, box 240, Turbotville, PA 17772,

THE ABOVE NOTICE FOUND IN INDIAN ARTIFACT MAGAZINE WAS SENT TO US BY SEVERAL MEMBERS TO INCLUDE IN THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER. Lets hope some members of WAA can make it to this Eastcoast event.

1989 C. A. S.
ATLATL CONTEST

Charles Lilly

The fourth annual Colorado Archaeological Society Encampment is scheduled for July 1st and 2nd, 1989. As usual, the main event of the Encampment is the atlatl contest. Native American games are also planned.

Each year, about the 4th of July, CAS finds a Colorado campground large enough to hold the 150 to 250 strong group with space for the activities. 1989 will see us at a brand new campground near Silver Jack Reservoir in the Uncompahgre National Forest. Located in southwestern Gunnison County, the campground is accessed by a gravel road off US #50, twenty-two miles east of Montrose. Go south about twenty miles along Cimarron Creek to Silver Jack Campground. For further information, contact Bill Harris, 1605 Mesa Street, Montrose, Colorado 81401. His phone number is (303) 249-8055.

The atlatl contest is open to anyone however, the "Greatest Honor" award is only given to Colorado Archaeological Society Members. In the past, target distances were set at 15, 40, 60 and 75 meters. Scores were based on the number of throws required to reach and touch or penetrate the target. A fifth throw was set at the 15 meter target for accuracy.

Only natural materials are permitted for atlatls and darts with the following exceptions: Modern glues and simulated sinew. At this time no high-tech equipment is permitted.

MONTANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEWS, Sep.-Oct. 1988, Montana
Historical Society....

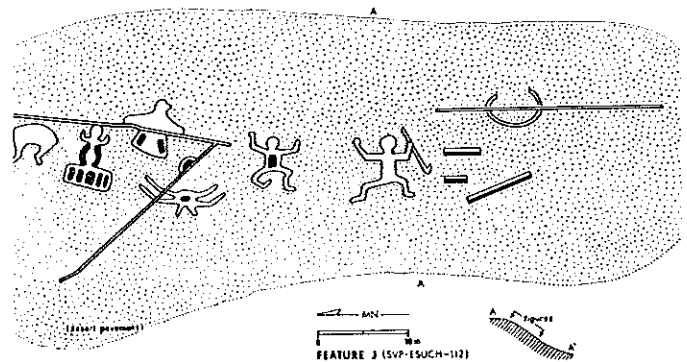
MONTANA STATE ATLATL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The first Montana state atlatl competition was held on October 1 at Dave Schwab's house near Helena. The atlatl or the spearthrower, an ancient weapon system that predates the bow and arrow in Montana archaeology, is making a resurgence in the western states with target competitions held in Wyoming and Colorado for several years running. Much of the new interest in this system in Montana has been generated through replicative studies conducted by MSU students Bob Perkins and Paul Leininger under the direction of Dr. Tom Roll.

Fifteen competitors took part in the first annual Montana state competition. The state champion and men's first place winner is Dr. Manuel White of Helena. Second place in the men's division went to Troy Helmick of Townsend with Dave Schwab taking third place honors. In the women's division, the winners were Diana Schwab, Cathy Etinger, and Daphne Digirindakis with First, second and third places respectively. Next years competition will be held early in August. The date and place will be announced later.

AMERICAN ANTIQUITY, Journal of
the Society for American
Archaeology, Oct. 1988

This issue has an excellent article titled "DESERT GROUND DRAWINGS IN THE LOWER SANTA VALLEY, NORTH COAST OF PERU, by David J. Wilson. Similar to the Nazca ground drawings, the principal technique used in constructing those of Santa Valley involved the removal of the dark, heavily patinated desert rocks to expose the lighter surface beneath. Additional techniques used in forming the figures included the placement of piles and lines of smaller rocks around their edges or on the interior surface of the lighter, cleared areas. Among the more notable and identifiable of these drawings are two humans, a bird and a lizard-like creature. The southern most of the two humans is slightly over 7 meters tall, and is holding what appears to be a spear thrower. Construction dates are estimated to be ca. B.C./A.D. 200.



THE SOONER YOU FALL BEHIND, THE
MORE TIME YOU HAVE TO CATCH UP.

A C H T U N G !

DAS SPEARSTICKEN MIT DER ATLATL

Das atlatl is ein springenstick mit der hooken und fingergrippen maken der arm long und throwen harder. Holden der atlatl in der mittengrabben, taken das spearsticken in der fingerholden und throwen in das targetsplösen.

Das atlatl is nicht fur das dumnkopfen mit der blind sightseenen.

Keepen der rubberneckken behind das line marken.

THE ATLATL by BILL TATE

The digger slowed his pace a bit
To keep the find intact,
Some ancient race with a hidden face
Had left this artifact.

The wood was cracked and weathered,
The antler tip was loose,
The leather grip had long been stripped,
All suffered time's abuse.

A thousand years had passed away
Since the wooden shank was seen,
And hands of man from a different clan
Gave it its glossy sheen.

The diggers mind went back in time
Beneath the heavy dust,
This ancient gear became quite clear
To the archaeologist.

The purpose of this ancient tool
Was clear to a practiced eye
Its tale concealed, but now revealed
Of a man and a time gone by.

Over rocks he scrambled,
Crossed creeks where valleys drained,
He fought his way in the heat of the day
To the grassy open plain.

Two days he trudged in hunger,
Two days he struggled on,
Then there in the haze on the very next day,
He spied a lone bison.

The beast was old and wizened
And surely saw the man,
But stood his ground on a grassy mound,
And plowed up the yellow sand.

Mating a hardwood foreshaft
With a point of banded yellow,
To a five foot dart made from the heart
Of a straightened shaft of willow,

He fit the spear onto the hook,
And with careful aim, let fly,
Like a bolt from the blue came the spear
straight and true,
And the beast let out a faint cry.

Rummaging through the bag at his hip
He fumbled for his knife,
With the stone blade he strode up the grade
Where the beast had given its life.

With well placed cuts he extracted the guts,
And mid blood that flowed like a river,
He thanked his god solely then all that was holy,
And offered him up the liver.

Then taking a rock he broke open the head,
And plunged his hand in the skull,
The brain was good, he ate what he could,
And he praised the old dead bull.

He skinned out the beast and gorged on its meat
Until his belly cried,
Then cutting the meat that he did not eat,
He wrapped it in the hide.

Dragging the pack he started back
To a shady little hollow,
Where he sliced the meat to dry and eat
In the weeks that were to follow.

He praised his god for a second time,
As he picked up the buffalo skin,
He fingered the side of the bison hide,
Where his projectile point went in.

Absently he grasped the sling,
The simple wood baton,
With its antler tip, and finger grip
It had hurled his spear shaft on.

The spear sling's shank was polished smooth,
The leather grip was torn,
The antler nub was just a stub
From uses it had borne

The shaft still flexed and cast its dart.
The hunter's aim was keen.
And, he wondered a bit as his mind pondered it,
Who invented this mighty machine.

But, neither he nor we shall ever know,
For time has hidden this fact,
We'll know little more of this ancient lore,
The history of this artifact.

ADVERTISEMENT

10% DISCOUNT

WAA members receive 10% discount on their purchases from the following firms manufacturing atlats and related equipment:

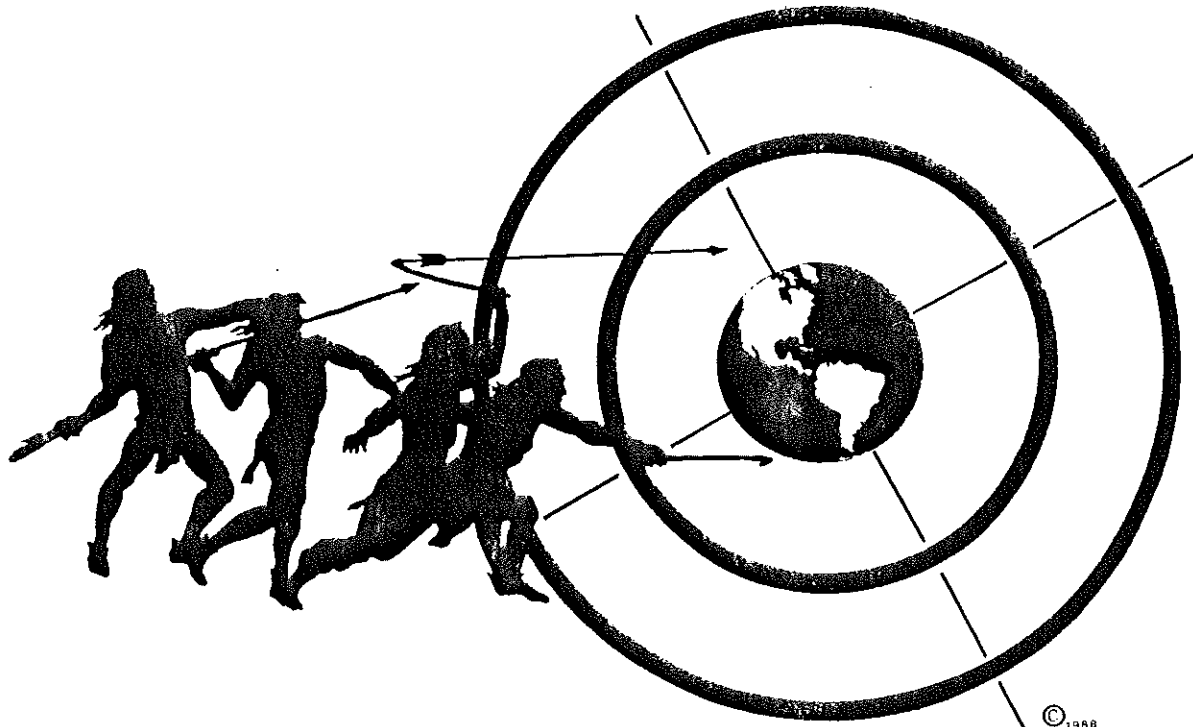
BPS Engineering, Box 797, Manhattan, Montana 59741, phone (406) 284-3307.

BPS Engineering is the maker of the "Mammoth Hunter" and other fine atlats and darts. Call or write them for more detailed information.

Tate Enterprises Unlimited, Inc., P. O. Box 110755, Aurora, CO 80011, phone (303) 364-0059. Contact Tate Enterprises for information on their "Spear Chucker" kits and readymade equipment.

YOUR INPUT

WE WOULD LIKE TO GATHER ALL SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE ATLATL FOR OUR NEWSLETTER, THE ATLATL. SEND YOUR NOTES, LOCATIONS OF MEETS, STORIES, EVENTS, CLIPPINGS, SITE REPORTS, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, AND CARTOONS RELATING THE ATLATL TO THIS NEWSLETTER SO ALL WAA MEMBERS MAY HEAR ABOUT IT. PLEASE ADDRESS CORRESPONDENCE TO: THE ATLATL, 8800 STATE HIGHWAY 133, CARBONDALE, CO 81623.



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